

**AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:**

Please replace the abstract of the invention with following amended abstract:

**Abstract of the Invention**

The present invention provides a method for growing crystals in a gel matrix by reacting tartrate anions with cations, the cations selected from the group consisting of  $K^+$ ,  $Ca^{2+}$ ,  $Na^+$ ,  $Mg^{2+}$  and  $Li^+$ . A method particularly adapted for growing cross-shaped crystals includes forming a gel matrix through cooling of a mixture of potassium bitartrate, boiling water and gelatin to less than 65°F until the matrix solidifies, adding calcium chloride to the gel matrix to react the calcium chloride with the potassium bitartrate at a temperature of preferably less than 65°F until crystals form, and separating cross-shaped crystals that have reached a desired size from the gel matrix by warming the gel to a liquid state and removing the crystals.